WE CLAIM:

1.   A   method   of   creating/terminating   a   connection
associated with an end-to-end path defined through a
communications network, the method comprising steps
of:

triggering substantially parallel cross-connection
download/undownload   processes   in   each
intermediate node of the end-to-end path; and

propagating a confirmation message indicative of
successful   completion   of   respective
download/undownload   processes   in   each
intermediate node to an end-node of the path.

2.   A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of
triggering substantially parallel cross-connection
download/undownload processes comprises steps of:

propagating a trigger message hop-by-hop through the
end-to-end path; and

at each intermediate node of the end-to-end path,
upon receipt of the trigger message:

forwarding the trigger message to a next node of
the path with minimum delay; and

initiating the download/undownload process.

3.   A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of
propagating a confirmation message comprises, at each
intermediate node of the end-to-end path, steps of:

receiving the confirmation message;

detecting successful completion of the respective
download/undownload process; and

forwarding the confirmation message to a next node of

the path.

4.   A method of downloading/undownloading a cross-
connection through a node within an end-to-end path
of a communications network, the method comprising
steps of:

receiving a trigger message and a confirmation
message from a first adjacent node of the end-to-
end path;

forwarding the trigger message to a next adjacent
node of the path with minimum delay;

triggering downloading/undownloading of the cross-
connection; and

subsequently forwarding the confirmation message to
the next adjacent node upon successful completion
of the download/undownload.

5.   A program for downlading/undownloading a cross-
connection through a node within an end-to-end path
of a communications network, the program being
adapted to control the node for:

receiving a trigger message and a confirmation
message from a first adjacent node of the end-to-
end path;

forwarding the trigger message to a next adjacent
node of the path with minimum delay;

triggering downloading/undownloading of the cross-
connection; and

subsequently forwarding the confirmation message to
the next adjacent node upon successful completion
of the download/undownload.